



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **Minutes 05/16/2013**

### **ARLINGTON TREE COMMITTEE**

Meeting of Arlington Tree Committee

Thursday, May 16 at 7:30 pm

Location: Selectmen's Hearing Room

Attendees: Mike Rademacher, Sally Naish, Patrice Robertie, Eliza Burden, Lisa Decker, Mary Ellen Aronow, Elizabeth Pilcher, Susan Stamps

### **Minutes**

(Liz Pilcher)

1. Approval of April Meeting Minutes

April Minutes approved

2. Tree Planting-Mary Ellen Aronow and Eliza Burden

- Spring 2013 Approach

Eliza and Mary Ellen presented the committee's plan of activities intended to complement DPW planting activities, as follows.

Before tree planting, the committee and the DPW reviewed a list of sites, which were compiled from tree requests and 2012/2013 call-in lists of storm damage/downed trees received by the DPW. A compilation of all the sites resulted in more than 400 separate locations. For the spring planting, the committee's plan was to evaluate 100 sites, categorize the size of tree and appropriateness of location, report the information to the DPW, and receive a list of homeowner email addresses to enable us to send watering instructions to homeowners. The approach also included providing watering instruction handouts to homeowners on the day of planting.

The bare root trees were received by the DPW, leaving only a few days to carry out the tree committee's plan. Several tree committee members evaluated tree planting sites on the weekend before the first day of planting and found on several occasions that a tree had not come down or that the tree site was not at the address of the homeowner that made the request. Only 40% of the sites were appropriate for a new tree. The tree committee was able to give the DPW 37 sites for the first day. Then the ATC reviewed the remaining 400+ sites and extracted another 30 or so sites for the second planting day. Following the second day of planting, the tree committee focused on additional sites targeting microburst sites and provided DPW with 30 or so sites for the last day of tree planting. Because watering instructions were not left at the time of planting by the DPW, members of the ATC distributed instructions to the homeowners 10 days later. The ATC plans to work with the DPW to update the consolidated list to reflect actual planting and site information.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

Moving forward it would be more successful if planting plans were based on gathering more thorough tree request information. Getting tree request information transferred from the DPW to the ATC when it comes in will allow the

ATC to evaluate the site and contact the homeowner to confirm that, when it comes time for planting, the homeowner will care for the tree.

- DPW Perspective-Mike Rademacher

Mike Rademacher responded by saying that the DPW could have done a better job communicating with the tree committee and apologized for the confusion. Mike said that the DPW needs to do a better job keeping a more accurate tree request list and data. When people call in they don't always leave information allowing future contact with them. DPW can ask for an email address. Also, tree requests are not always made by the person in front of whose house the tree was lost, so there is less assurance that the tree will be cared for by an interested homeowner.

Mike said that tree requests sites are his first priority for planting trees. He agreed that, in advance of planting, the ATC can evaluate the sites and leave a notice with the homeowner stating the DPW's intention to plant a tree and leaving written care instructions. Mike said that a list of requests can be given to the tree committee once a month.

Mike said that the DPW is planning on doing a tree planting in the fall. Mike would rather the ATC select sites based on the remaining 300 or so locations on the consolidated list rather than taking more requests. The DPW may hire a landscaper to plant the trees.

ACTION:

- The ATC will review the procedure for the fall planting and send it to MR.
- The ATC will update the current consolidated list.

3. Memorial Tree Planting-Sally Naish

Members of the committee spoke with Brian Murray's family about tree types and sites. The Arlington High School front lawn was suggested as the preferred location. Sally Naish talked to Schools' Superintendent Kathleen Bodie, who was amenable to planting a tree on the lawn at the high school. She also spoke with Marie Krepelka about the formal request procedure. There were concerns about possible future remodeling at the High School inhibiting the long life of a memorial tree. ATC discusses planting at Brackett or Robbins Farm Park as an alternative site

ACTION: Sally will look for a possible planting site at the Brackett School.

4. Off-berm Planting-Mike Rademacher

- Status within DPW

Mike Rademacher suggested several ways for homeowners to acquire a tree for planting on their property within the required number of feet from the curb or from the sidewalk, including:

- The town can provide a number of trees for free and the homeowner can pick up the tree, plant it, and own it.
- The town can offer a number of trees to homeowners at cost. Perhaps a Buy a Tree program could simplify the process.

The town and the tree committee will have to consider the above two suggestions in light of the Trees Please fund where Arlingtonians donate money for additional trees.

Mike said that the DPW would prefer not to have to receive and care for bare root trees. Liz mentioned that Matt Foti has a nursery and provides bare root tree stock in the spring.

Susan confirmed that she spoke with town counsel who approved that it is permissible to use public money to plant a privately owned tree under the shade tree regulation.

ACTION:

Liz will talk to Matt Foti to see if he would provide 50 bare root trees paid for by the town of Arlington. At present the town pays an average of \$100 for a 1 to 1 1/2 inch tree.

#### 5. ATC Mission and Objectives-Sally Naish

- Review of current Mission and Objectives
- DPW perspective on ATC's role

Sally Naish reviewed the current mission and objectives. These are as follows:

The mission of the Committee is to promote the protection, planting, and care of trees in Arlington. Our current objectives are:

- Increase the number of site-appropriate public trees
- Promote community awareness of trees and their benefits
- Provide a website about trees and related Town services
- Provide training in tree selection, planting, and care
- Develop a list of recommended trees
- Raise funds to support the Tree Committee's mission
- Explore the feasibility of a Town-wide tree inventory

Sally asked Mike if he thought the ATC should have a strategic plan. MR said that the objectives looked good to him and that he liked the idea of a strategic plan. Depending on how much time we have, he said that a tree inventory is a good idea, but that the Town has limited resources to do an inventory.

Sally asked if the inventory could be integrated with the functions of the tree division. Mike said that it would be great to have an all-inclusive system that integrated with WebQA and could be kept up-to-date by the town. Eliza says that the tree location can have a Web QA number which links the two systems. The GIS system has to be intuitive with a simple user interface. Eliza talked to Adam Kurowski about a tree inventory. Adam mocked up a tree inventory form. When the Town acquired the Web QA system, it answered 75% of their needs. WebQA is the format in which all requests come into the Town-for trees, street lights, water transmission pipe, pot holes, etc. Liz suggested that the updated consolidated list could be the start of a tree inventory.

ACTION: We need to explore how WebQA could interface with a GIS-generated tree inventory.

MR said it may be useful to catalogue new trees that have been planted using Adam 's system.

#### 6. Publicity-Patrice Robertie

- Approach to date

Patrice presented coverage in print media and building a relationship with the Advocate. Other media have picked up releases in the Advocate and published them.

- Strategy for future
  - o Media List-Shopper Globe Sunday
  - o Social Media-Twitter
  - o Website-updating that
  - o Promotional Postcard

Educate, increase number of trees, reaching out to people to get them more interested in caring for trees

- DPW perspective

MR thinks this is perfect; DPW can do notices through the Town Notification System to advertise trees to people who will take care of them.

#### 7. Open Q & A with Mike Rademacher

See above.

8. Other Business

- Meeting with Sustainable Arlington

ACTION: Sally Naish will set up a meeting.

- Chairful Where You Sit: 7/21-28. Deadline: 6/20/13
  - Town Day: The ATC needs to file an application. Mike offered the committee a ball and burlap tree for a raffle.
  - Three public sessions for master planning committee have been announced. Susan will attend one, Liz will attend one.
  - Sally is retiring from the chair position as of June 2013. She asked if anyone was interested in the co-chair position. Patrice Robertie expressed interest.
- Next meeting: Wednesday, June 12th, 2013 at 7:30 pm in Selectmen's Hearing Room